



## State of Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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To Whom It May Concern:

The Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is concerned about the short time frame in which important long-term educational decisions affecting deaf and hard of hearing children are being made without the consultation of experts in deaf education.

While the Council compliments the State Board of Education's sub-committee on its openness to stakeholder input, the Council believes that the sub-committee needs the assistance of expert consultants in deaf education to round out the experience of the sub-committee members.

Such experts could provide the sub-committee with several viable structural models that have been successfully implemented in other states. The sub-committee would then be able to objectively assess the potential efficacy of these models and adopt one of them to meet the needs of Idaho students.

This approach would complement the efforts of the OPE and JLOC committee. Such consultation would not likely require a lengthy process. Rather, experts could present the advantages and disadvantages of several delivery models and field questions from the sub-committee. In fact, the ISU Deaf Education program is poised to do such a study, which the majority on the Council favor having them do, prior to final decisions being made about permanent changes in deaf education for the state. The Council urges the sub-committee to seriously consider the benefits of this approach.

Sincerely,

### **The CDHH Board of Directors**

Jill Beck, MD – Otolaryngologist (ENT)  
Ron Schow, Ph.D. – Audiology Professor  
Jo Ann Shopbell, MA, CSC, SC:L, NAD Level V Master – Interpreter Educator  
Chuck Neyman, M.S. – Retired Audiologist, hard of hearing organizational representative  
Mary Reis, M.S. – Parent of a hard of hearing child  
Nancy Henry, Ed. S. – Parent of a deaf child  
Steven Stubbs, B.S. – Deaf organization representative  
Walter Jastremsky – Deaf community member

## Appendix A – The National Agenda

The [Council] proposes the following goals for re-making the educational delivery system for deaf and hard of hearing children and thereby freeing them to learn. This is material from the recently published National Agenda on deaf and hard of hearing education.

1. Early Identification and Intervention	The Development of Communication, Language, Social, and Cognitive Skills at the earliest possible age is fundamental to subsequent educational growth for deaf and hard of hearing students.
2. Language and Communication Access	All children who are deaf and hard of hearing deserve a quality communication-driven program that provides education together with a critical mass of communication, age, and cognitive peers, as well as language-proficient teachers and staff who communicate directly in the child's language.
3. Collaborative Partnerships	Partnerships which will influence education policies and practices to promote quality education for students who are deaf and hard of hearing must be explored.
4. Accountability, High Stakes Testing, and Standards-Based Environments	Instruction for students who are deaf and hard of hearing must be data-driven and must focus on multiple measures of student performance.
5. Placement, Programs, and Services	The continuum of placement options must be available to all students who are deaf and hard of hearing, with the recognition that natural and least restrictive environments are intricately tied to communication and language.
6. Technology	Accommodations, assistive and adaptive technologies, and emerging technologies must be maximized to improve learning for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.
7. Professional Standards and Personnel Preparation	New collaborations and initiatives among practitioners and training programs must address the serious shortage of qualified teachers, [interpreters], [SLPs], and administrators
8. Research	Federal and state dollars should be spent on effective, research-based programs and practices.

\*Quoted from The National Agenda: Moving Forward on Achieving Educational Equality for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students, April 2005

## Appendix B – The Council’s Recommendations

The Council urges the sub-committee to consider the following recommendations:

1. Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A phased downsizing of the Gooding campus with a careful process to transition to a new self-contained day-campus and modest residential facility in an urban area for those who do not thrive in their LEA. This should be done over a 2-3 year period through the application of a feasibility study to determine location and other specifics. This transition should also be coordinated with regional Oral/Aural programs throughout the state</li> <li>▪ Qualified staff and leadership for Total Communication (TC) and Oral/Aural methodologies</li> <li>▪ Separate educational programs for the deaf and blind, but on same campus</li> <li>▪ Increase funding for Oral/Aural education to meet demand</li> <li>▪ Take advantage of economy of scale by having a critical mass of students</li> </ul>
2. Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One size does not fit all – students must have options and support</li> <li>▪ Parents need objective information to help them choose</li> <li>▪ Continuing information and support for parents/students who choose to change communication methodology</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive sign classes to parents who choose the TC method</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive training resources for parents who choose Oral/Aural</li> <li>▪ Deaf language mentors made available through ISDB outreach</li> </ul>
3. Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Early identification through hearing screening program</li> <li>▪ Classroom acoustics modernized to meet standards</li> <li>▪ Agency must be sufficiently agile to adapt to existing and emerging technologies</li> </ul>
4. Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase teachers’ salaries to coincide with peers in public system</li> <li>▪ Increase outreach programs</li> <li>▪ More training in Oral/Aural , and signing, for respective program personnel, and more training for interpreters</li> <li>▪ Three to four regionally-based audiologists to serve the 3/4 of Idaho's hard of hearing public school children who do not currently have the services of an audiologist</li> <li>▪ ISDB have formal role in training interpreters</li> <li>▪ ISU should be supported in providing a supply of "highly qualified" teachers and educational interpreters to meet the demand in all approaches or options for educating deaf and hard of hearing students in Idaho (oral/aural, TC, bi/bi). Other higher education institution(s) should be identified in the region or USA who also may help meet the demand. Further, the certification process for teachers--in education of the deaf--in Idaho should be altered so it is on a par with all other certification in the Northwest and Mountain states. The current certification process is preventing teachers with Oral/Aural skills from becoming certified in this state</li> </ul>
5. Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ K-12 sign language interpreter minimum standard into law</li> </ul>
6. ISDB’s Role & Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clarify ISDB’s statutory relationship with LEAs and other state agencies</li> </ul>

## **Appendix C – Position Statement on Communication Methodology**

The Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is a state agency devoted to coordinating, advocating for, and developing public policies and programs that provide full and equal opportunity and accessibility for deaf and hard of hearing persons in Idaho. In addition, the Council is statutorily charged with determining the extent and availability of services to the deaf and hard hearing, determining the need for further services, and making appropriate recommendations to government officials to insure that the needs of deaf and hard of hearing citizens are best served (67-7307).

Accordingly, one of the Council's goals is to ensure that Idaho's deaf and hard of hearing citizens have access to communication. Several major communication methodologies exist among deaf and hard of hearing Americans. Some use sign language, cued speech, oral/aural, speechreading, other methods, or all of the above, depending upon the situation in which they find themselves. Some choose to use amplification technology and others do not. These choices are highly individual and one methodology cannot and should not be applied to all deaf or hard of hearing individuals.

The Council is not in the business of making methodology choices for people. Rather, the Council is in the business of recommending and providing resources for the choices people make. Consequently, the Council supports the equal distribution of resources as they pertain to communication methodologies, according to local trends and demand for such resources.

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